Chapter Four

TRIBAL MOVEMENTS AND THE BISON HIDE TRADE: 1807-1850

The year 1807 ushers in the beginning of another era, when the tribal nations of the Plains faced new challenges, precipitated in one way or another by the growing presence of foreigners in their midst. The newcomers were now largely Americans who came to the region, as the French and Spanish before them, to develop a commerce that revolved around a trade in beaver skins and other peltries. Beginning in the 1820s, the fur-trade became unprofitable and in its place a new kind of commerce evolved around a traffic in buffalo robes as well as deer, antelope, and elk skins (Mekeel 1943:168-173; Wishart 1979:41-115; Swagerty 1988:73; Kardullas 1990:35; Klein 1993:133-160; Pickering 1994:61; Moore, J. 1996b; Isenberg 2000:97-113). Over time, the tribal nations of the region developed more specialized economies that focused on the hunting of bison and the processing of their hides for American markets. Although bison were the mainstay of Native economies in earlier times, they were hunted mostly for subsistence and for exchange with neighboring tribes. Once American markets were developed, the demand for hides and robes escalated (Hyde 1961:29-33). Tribes began to spend much more of their labor on hunting bison and processing their robes for the commercial marketplace (Pickering 1994:62-66). As a result, they were under greater pressure to find and maintain control over territories that held the best bison ranges. As these ranges became depleted in areas east of the Black Hills, local tribes began to push farther west and south to find better hunting grounds (Hyde 1961:29).

The buffalo hide market was a big business, employing thousands of people who collected the hides procured and processed by American Indians for export to factories in the East. The hides were transformed into a variety of leather products, including industrial strength belts for factory machines and upholstery for carriage and buggy seats (Price, C. 1996:47). The Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos became some of the biggest tribal producers for this market (Moore, J. 1996b). Steamboats on the Missouri and freighters traveling the Overland Trail were able to transport large quantities of bison robes to markets in the East (Wishart 1979:83-87; Swagerty 1988:77; Pickering 1994:61). It is estimated that during the heyday of the bison trade as many as eighty-thousand hides were shipped annually from some of the trading posts along the upper reaches of the Platte and Missouri rivers (Hyde 1937:62; Isenberg 2000:105-109). The Lakota alone were reported to supply more than fifty-thousand robes in the early 1830s (Feltskog in Parkman 1969:680 n6). Fort Pierre, at the mouth of the Bad River on the Missouri, was one of the most important posts for collecting hides from tribes who hunted in the Black Hills, but, within a decade, Fort Laramie and other sites on the Platte River became major entrepots for the hide trade (Isenberg 2000:108-109).

Transformations in the region's economy directly affected how tribes related to one another, and how they distributed themselves over local landscapes. As trade companies multiplied the locations where they set up their operations, tribes no longer relied on each other for access to European and now American trade goods. The long-distance trade chains that once connected tribes living in the Black Hills with those residing on the Missouri began to break down (Albers 1993:105; Pickering 1994:64). By the 1820s, nearly every tribal nation had one or more trading houses in their own territory, and three decades later, there were trading posts in almost every

district within a given tribe's territorial range. As trade sites proliferated near the Black Hills, tribes no longer needed to travel to the Missouri, much less the Minnesota River, to secure the guns and other trade items they now required. In the face of this transition, intertribal confederations began to develop around tribes who shared and protected a common territorial range, which included prime bison hunting grounds and good grazing lands for their horses (Ewers 1975). When bison numbers began to decline precipitously, these ranges became bitterly contested between tribes who stood in opposing confederations (Albers 1993:122-128).

After 1834, emigrants started to stream into the region, following the Platte River before crossing the mountains to their final destinations in Oregon, Washington, and California. The Overland Trail cut through the heart of some of the region's best tribal hunting territories. This eventually led many of the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos to travel farther south to the Republican River and north to the Yellowstone to reach less disturbed bison ranges. As more and more settlers used this trail (exceeding 55,000 per year by 1850), many bands became dislocated not only from their prime hunting lands but also from some of the best riparian locations for their winter campsites (Price, C. 1996:27-30; Isenberg 2000:109-110). After 1845, the bands that typically wintered along the Platte River were becoming increasingly alarmed by the disturbances to their hunting and settlement areas (Fowler 1982:22). In retaliation, they began to launch raids against emigrant wagon trains. The emigrants responded by demanding the U.S. government take action to ensure their safe passage across the plains. In the summer of 1845, a force of dragoons under Colonel S.W. Kearney was sent to the Platte to intimidate local tribes and to warn them that they would be punished if the raiding continued (Hyde 1937:103-105; Hurt 1974:224-225; Price, C. 1996:28). A year later, when Parkman (in Feltskog 1969:63-64, 117-118, 129-30, 144-145, 147, 534) traveled the Overland Trail, he reported that the raiding went on unabated, not only against emigrant trains but also against the Pawnees, Shoshones, and Crows. As the hostile incidents increased, the U.S. military started to establish posts within reach of the Black Hills. Indian Agents arrived too, and they were responsible for managing relations between the United States and the tribal nations who lived along the overland trails. All of this led in the coming decades to major confrontations between the U.S. military and the allied forces of Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos.

Between 1807 and 1850, a combination of forces, which developed out of a growing American presence in the region, set the stage for rapid shifts in the demographic profile of the tribal nations who peopled the Black Hills. The following discussion gives evidence of some of the change.

I. THE HISTORIC SOURCES

During the first half of the nineteenth century, much of what we know about the Black Hills was still written by Europeans and Americans at some distance from the area. In fact, before 1850, only two very brief accounts came from people who actually traveled in or near the Hills. The Missouri River remained the location where much of the information originated, although the Platte River was rapidly gaining ground as a place where traders, travelers, missionaries, and government agents wrote about the Hills.

A. The View From the Missouri River

American commercial interests dominated the Black Hills region after 1803, although French traders continued their operations here in association with companies owned by Americans. In 1807, Manual Lisa in partnership with William Morrison and Peter Menard started the Missouri

Fur Company. It was not until 1811, however, when Henry Breckenridge (1966) accompanied one of Lisa's expeditions up the Missouri that a written record was left about the area and the tribal nations he encountered (Chittenden 1935:1:114-119). The following year, John Luttig (in Dumm 1964; Hurt 1974:165-166), a Missouri Fur Company employee, traveled with Lisa and wrote of his journey. After Lisa's death in 1820, Joshua Pilcher took control of the Missouri Fur Company's operations, and he became an important source of information about the region in testimony given before the U.S. Congress (Pilcher 1824; Chittenden 1935:1:114-119, 125; Hurt 1974:178-180).

On the plains west of the Missouri, unlike locations to the north, most tribal nations were not inclined to invest a great amount of labor in the trapping of small fur-bearing mammals. As a result, when the American Fur Company of St. Louis and other fur-trade outfits began to operate, they brought in non-Indians, now popularly known as "mountain men," to trap the animals. In the early years, these trappers usually traveled in large brigades. One of the most famous of these, the "Astorians," named after John Jacob Aster, owner of the American Fur Company, included sixty-three men who traveled up the Missouri to the Arikara villages on the Grand River and then across the Plains skirting the Black Hills to the Snake and Columbia river drainages (Wishart 1979: 115-204; Irving 1897). Under the leadership of Wilson Hunt, the expedition of 1811 included the naturalist, John Bradbury (1966), who traveled as far as the Arikara villages and wrote about his tour. Another company that sent out large brigades was the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, which was formed by William Ashley and Andrew Henry in 1822. One of these brigades, led by Jedediah Smith, probably entered the Black Hills at the Buffalo Gap (Palais 1941: 4-5).[1] Many years later one of the expedition's members James Clyman (in Camp 1960), wrote a narrative recalling their famous tour. The account is very confusing, and it is hard to track what routes the brigade actually traveled through the southern Hills. Ashley himself led another party in 1823, but the Arikaras attacked it. This brought the arrival of American military troops under the command of Colonel Henry Leavenworth (High Hawk in Curtis 1907-30:3:173; Chittenden 1935:1:247-249). Two years later, an American military expedition led by General H. Atkinson and Major Benjamin O' Fallen (1929; Jensen and Hutchins 2001) came to the region and negotiated the first peace treaties with the tribal nations of the Missouri River and the Black Hills. They left a wealth of information on the whereabouts of these nations and their relations with each other. Fourteen years later in 1839, Joseph Nicollet (DeMallie 1975, 1976) led a government sponsored scientific expedition to Fort Pierre on the Missouri River where he recorded some of the most detailed information on the locations of Lakotas in and around the Black Hills.

Notwithstanding their emphasis on the use of trapping brigades, American entrepreneurs and their employees continued to expand their trade entrepots, not only along the larger and well-traveled rivers like the Missouri but also along branch streams in more remote locations closer to the Black Hills (Cassells, Smith and Smith 1984:133-135). While carrying on trading operations of varying scale and intensity in the region, many of the traders and their employees, most of whom were French in descent, married into the tribes with whom they lived and worked. Over the years, a new community of native people emerged on the Plains, whose lives were centered on the trading forts of their European American fathers (Bent in Hyde 1968; Swagerty 1988:75, 82; Pickering 1994:61). Although most of the traders who lived in the region left little written information about their experiences, one of them was a notable exception. Edwin Denig, an employee of the American Fur Company, wrote journals and extensive descriptions of the tribal

[1] Some writers (Palais 1941:4-5; Turner 1974:16) claim that Smith's brigade entered the Black Hills at the Buffalo Gap and followed Beaver Creek into the interiors. Given the fact that Clyman talks about passing through a narrow, deep rocky canyon, one source (Parker, W. 1966:9) traces their route into the Hills by way of French Creek.

nations he encountered in more than twenty years of service between 1833 and 1855 in the Upper Missouri trade, including a short stay at a trading post on the Cheyenne River tributary, Cherry Creek (Ewers 1961). Denig's writings contain some of the most detailed commentary on the Black Hills and the tribes who lived there. He also provided Henry J. Schoolcraft (1851-1857) with information included in his monumental work on the tribal nations of the United States.

In this era, several European travelers made grand tours of the northern plains. Paul Wilhelm, Duke of Württemberg, who arrived in 1823, was one of the earliest of these travelers. Although he had little to say about the Black Hills, he did note that some of the Lakotas were hunting there (Hurt 1974:170-173). A decade later, Maximilian, Prince of Wied (in Thwaites 1966) toured the Missouri between 1833-1834. He kept copious notes of his travels and conversations with local traders and tribal peoples, and some of these include important and specific references to the Black Hills.

Missionaries were now arriving in the region, and many of them recorded their observations of the area too. Samuel Parker, who represented the American Board of Foreign Missions, traveled the Missouri in the years between 1835 and 1837 (Hurt 1974:216-217). Stephen J. Riggs, a Presbyterian missionary, who worked among the Dakota of Minnesota, visited Fort Pierre in 1840 (Price, C. 1996:48). The Belgian priest, Father Pierre Jean De Smet, (Thwaites 1966:22:136) arrived in the area in 1840, and he purportedly was the first clergyman to set foot in the Black Hills.

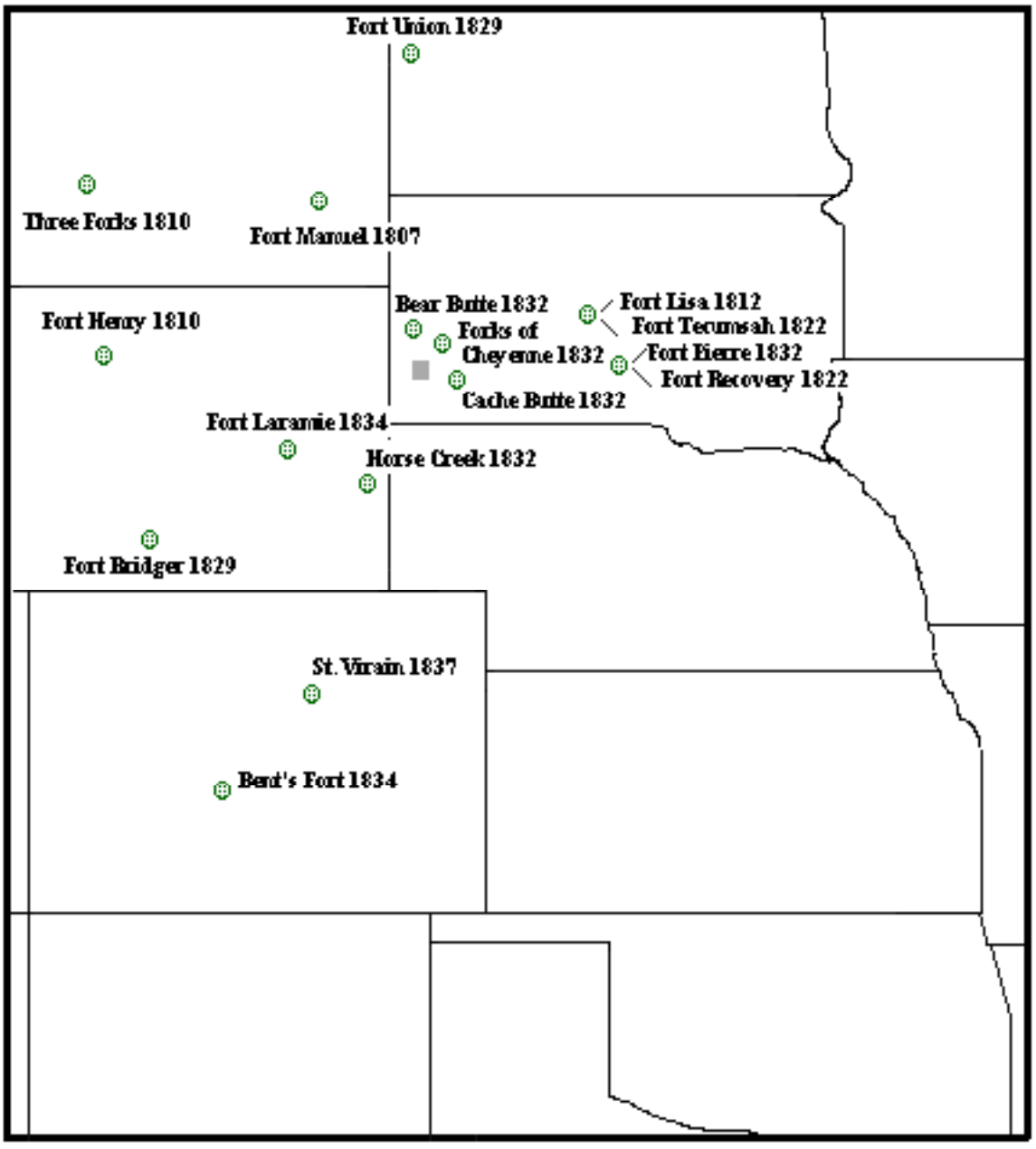
B. The View From the Platte River

Although much important writing about the Black Hills and the tribes who lived there continued to come from sources tied to locations east of the Black Hills, the vast majority of the documents after 1840 were written from the vicinity of the Platte River. This happened because most of the populations who traveled and lived in the Black Hills now traded on this river instead of the Missouri and also because this became a major route of emigrant travel. In 1819, a military party led by Major Stephen J. Long crossed the Plains to the Rocky Mountains by way of the Platte River. Two journals, one by Captain John R. Bell (1957) and another by Edwin James (in Thwaites 1966), provide rich accounts of the tribal nations who lived in the regions they traveled. Twenty-three years later, in 1842, John C. Fremont (in Viola and Ehrenberg 1988) led a scientific expedition through the area, and his journal contains important information on the locations of various tribal nations. The traveler and adventurer, Francis Parkman (in Feltskog 1969), followed the Oregon Trail in 1846, and he also left a rich, albeit at times very confusing, account of his encounters with tribal peoples and trappers who stayed in the general vicinity of the Black Hills and the Laramie Mountains.

C. The View From the Black Hills

Other than Father De Smet's limited comments about meeting Cheyennes at the base of the Black Hills (in Thwaites 1966) and Francis Parkman's descriptions (in Mason 1947; in Feltskog 1969), many of which actually apply to the Laramie Mountains and not the Black Hills proper, only one other observer left a record of his presence in this area before 1850. James Clyman (in

FIGURE 5. Locations of Some Early American Trading Posts



Camp 1960),[2] a member of Jedediah Smith's trapping brigade, offered a brief glimpse of his travels through the area. Again, it is mostly from tribal oral traditions and winter counts that we find a more detailed picture of Native life in the Black Hills during this period (Good in Mallery 1893; High Hawk in Curtis 1907-30: 3; Kindred in Beckwith, M. 1930; Carloff in Powers, W. 1963; Bent in Hyde 1968; Swift Dog in Praus 1962; Red Horse Owner in Karol 1969; Iron Teeth in Marquis and Limbaugh 1973; Howard, J. 1979; No Ears, Short Man, and Iron Crow in Walker 1982; American Horse and Cloud-Shield in Mallery 1987; White Bull in Howard, J. 1998).

II. CHANGING TRIBAL OCCUPANCY OF THE BLACK HILLS

Between 1807 and 1850, another major shift was under way for the tribal nations who peopled the Black Hills. At the beginning of the period, some of the populations who once lived within reach of these Hills, including the Kiowas, Comanches, and Plains Apaches, were gone, returning only occasionally to trade or raid. The Cheyennes and the Arapahos were the tribal nations who now dominated the landscape with increasing numbers of Lakotas in their midst. By the end of the period, the demography of the area had shifted again. The Lakotas were the ones who prevailed, with bands of Arapahos and Cheyennes living among them.

A. Those Who Left

By 1807, the tribal nations who once dominated the Black Hills had abandoned whatever territories they held on the southern edge of the Hills, especially along the South Fork of the Cheyenne River. To briefly recapitulate, the Padouca Apaches, followed by the Comanches, controlled much of the area where Wind Cave National Park now sits in the early half of the eighteenth century, and, for a brief period of time, from the 1730s to the 1760s, they were joined by the Poncas who came to the region to hunt bison and acquire horses. The northern and western sides of the Hills were inhabited by the Arapahos, Kiowas, and Plains (Kiowa) Apaches, who began to abandon these locations in the 1760s and move towards the southern reaches of the Hills, where they displaced and/or incorporated into their own ranks the Padouca and Comanche populations who were still living there. As late as 1803, a small number of the Padouca Apaches still remained in the area, but a decade later, most of them had relocated to areas along the Platte River.

Under rising pressure from the Lakotas, the Kiowas, Plains Apaches, and Comanches, eventually withdrew from their locations between the South Fork of the Cheyenne and the Platte River and moved to regions farther south where they joined the main body of Comanches. By the early nineteenth century, the Kiowas, Plains Apaches, and Comanches were regularly reported as sharing encampments and a vast territorial range that hugged the Rocky Mountains from the South Fork of the Platte to the Arkansas River. After 1807, there are only a few records of their presence near the Black Hills.

Unlike earlier times, these tribes no longer took their trade to locations near the Hills. The days of the large trade gatherings of the Kiowas, Plains Apaches, Comanches, Arapahos, and Cheyennes near the mouth of French Creek and at the foot of Bear Butte had passed. Now their large summer trade rendezvous shifted to a site at Horse Creek, a tributary of the Platte River on the Wyoming-Nebraska border (Hyde 1937:33; Mayhall, 1971:43). As a Lakota presence in this area increased, even this trade location became too dangerous for the Kiowas, and after 1825,

[2] His reminiscences were compiled in 1871, when he was 79, 48 years after he was in the Black Hills. The precise accuracy of his recollections is probably questionable. In fact, at times, Clyman (in Camp 1960:20) questions his own memory.

they never returned to it (Mayhall 1971:43). White Bull (in Howard, J. 1998:15), however, indicates that in the year 1814-1815 a peace council took place in the Black Hills between the Lakotas and Kiowas that was derailed when a Lakota clubbed a Kiowa at the event.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, relations between the Kiowas and their Arapaho and Cheyenne friends started to deteriorate. Historical records and oral traditions report the steady intensification of rivalries between these tribes. In the 1820s, a full scale war broke out between them, driving the Kiowas and their Apache and Comanche allies even farther south to the Arkansas River region where they remained until the reservation era (Grinnell 1956:32-34; Berthong 1963:23; Weist 1977:42; Coel 1981:14; Foster and McCollough 2001:928; Fowler 2001:841-842; Kavanagh 2001:888). In subsequent decades, the Black Hills disappeared from their visual horizon except as a vital memory of a place where their ancestors once lived, where important wars had been fought, and where highly sacred knowledge had been received (McAllister 1965; Mooney 1979).

The rising hostilities between the Kiowas and Lakotas had two major consequences, one of which was the combined forces of Kiowas, Plains Apaches, and Comanches hardly ever returned to their old haunts in the Black Hills (Larson 1997:27-28). The second major effect was the emergence of a major north-south divisional split within the ranks of the Arapahos and Cheyennes. Along with the Kiowas, Plains Apaches, and Comanches, the Arapahos were well established in the Black Hills throughout much of the eighteenth century. Indeed, their recorded whereabouts closely follow the reports of these other tribes. As the Cheyennes moved to the northern reaches of the Hills, they became aligned with all of the groups who already lived there, especially the Arapahos. Both the Cheyennes and the Arapahos were caught in the middle of the escalating warfare between the Kiowas and Lakotas. It was during the period when this warfare went on unabated that the Arapahos and Cheyennes began to pull back from their alliance with the Kiowas. Although the reasons for the separation have never been fully documented in ethnohistoric sources, it can be conjectured that the Arapahos and Cheyennes were unable to maintain a neutral stand in the face of the rising hostilities and had to take sides. They ended up favoring their alliance with the Lakotas. In subsequent decades, some Arapahos and most of the Cheyennes remained in the immediate vicinity of the Black Hills. But the larger body of Arapahos and a few Cheyennes began moving into areas south and west of the Black Hills abandoned by their former Kiowa, Plains Apache, and Comanche allies. In time, as described in the next section, major segments of the Arapaho and Cheyenne would leave their settlements near the Hills and along the Platte River and move south to hunt and trade in the vicinity of the Republican and Arkansas rivers.

As the Kiowas and their allies, the Plains Apaches and Comanches, moved out of the Hills, so too did the Crows. Unlike the wars unfolding on the southern flanks of the Hills, the northern battleground involved a largely unified front of Arapahos,[3] Cheyennes, and Lakotas waging war against the Crows and driving their enemy from locations at the headwaters of the Little Missouri and away from the Hills region entirely (Mallery 1893:319; Hyde 1937:33-35; Swift Dog in Praus 1962:11,13; Hurt 1974:238; Moulton 1983: 3:25,26 n7). By the 1820s, the Crows had retreated to areas west of the Powder River, and by the 1850s, their territorial reach did not extend far beyond the Yellowstone River (Voget 2001:697-698). In a letter written to Valentine McGillycuddy, the agent at Pine Ridge, William Garrett (in Friswold 1976:130), a former scout and interpreter wrote: "The Crows never owned the Black Hills, but they used to sneak in there

[3] The Arapahos were not always firmly committed to this alliance against the Crows, and they were known to trade with them throughout the nineteenth century.

and hunt, pick fruit and get lodge poles. They never had permanent homes there and were always run out by the Sioux as soon as they found they were there."

In the aftermath of a succession of disease epidemics, the strength of the once powerful Missouri River tribes was broken. The long-distance trade chains that once connected these groups with those living in the Black Hills and along the Minnesota River largely disappeared. American traders, who were now nearly everywhere in the region, undercut the middleman roles that many local tribes played in the region's trade. This had especially disastrous consequences for the Arikaras, who saw their powerful trade position erode in less than three decades. In 1823, they killed a group of Ashley's trappers in a desperate attempt to block their passage upriver (Parks 2001a: 367). In retaliation, Colonel Henry Leavenworth, with a small group of infantry and rifleman, mobilized a group of Lakotas to join them and attack the Arikaras. The battle lines were drawn, but before a fight ensued, the Arikara chiefs presented their peace pipes. The peace negotiations were never concluded, for the Arikaras fled their villages in the night (Hyde 1937:38-39). In the coming years, Lakota and Arikara relations deteriorated and entered into a cycle of skirmishes that ultimately forced the Arikaras to leave their Missouri homeland in 1832 to take up residence with their distant Skidi Pawnee relatives in Nebraska (Hyde 1951:183-185). After four years with the Pawnees, they returned to the Missouri to live with their former Mandan enemies just at the time another smallpox epidemic nearly wiped out the village populations in 1837-1838 (Hyde 1937:49; Parks 2001a:367).

After their return to the Missouri River, the relations the Arikaras held with their former Lakota and Cheyenne trade partners became even more tempestuous. Although the Cheyennes continued to trade with them, albeit in a diminished way, many Lakotas appear to have abandoned their trade connections not only with the Arikaras but also their Dakota-speaking relatives who lived farther east on the Minnesota River. The disruption of trade and the continuing enmities with the Lakotas severely limited the ability of the Arikaras and their neighbors, the Hidatsas and Mandans, to access the Hills as they had done in the past (Parks 2001a: 367).

Although the Mandans and Hidatsas were reported to make trips to the Black Hills[4] by way of the Little Missouri River for hunting bighorn and elk and trapping eagles as late as the 1830s, these excursions probably became less frequent once their Crow allies were driven from the region by the combined forces of Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahos (Thwaites 1966:2:346-347; Bowers 1950:210, 1963:238, 259). Many battles were reported between these semihorticultural tribes and the Lakotas near Bear Butte (Odell 1942:34). When the Mandan and Hidtasa tribes lost more people in the smallpox epidemics of 1836-1837, their ability to travel independently to a territory now dominated by enemies was further compromised, although one Lakota winter count reports Mandan wintering in the Black Hills at Bear Butte in 1844-45 (Mallery 1987:119). By 1851, when a combined force of Arikaras, Hidatsas, and Mandans traveled to the Fort Laramie Treaty conference in Wyoming, the Black Hills was considered enemy country. Repeating the words of his Arikara ancestor, Carries Moccasins, Alfred Morsette (Parks 1991:379) said: "Now this is where there are enemies, here in this country. If they see us, they'll kill us." In less than half a century, the Black Hills went from being a prime hunting ground for these tribes to the territory of their enemies.

[4] References to Hidatsa and Mandan hunting excursions in the Black Hills may actually mean the hills and buttes along the Little Missouri not the Black Hills proper. It is hard to determine the locations to which some early sources refer because of the ambiguous uses of the name "Black Hills" during this time period. Alfred Bower's work (1950, 1963), however, was conducted in the twentieth century when there was no longer any confusion between the Black Hills proper and other high elevation locations west of the Missouri River.

Farther south on the Missouri, at the mouth of the Niobrara, were the villages of the Poncas, also much reduced by epidemic disease. This tribe, by contrast, appears to have been able to maintain a limited degree of access to the Black Hills and the upper reaches of the White River well into the nineteenth century through a pattern of intermarriage with the Sicangu division of the Lakotas (Howard, J. 1965a:28; Hurt 1974:203-204). By the late 1830s, an identifiable band of Ponca-Lakota ancestry, the *Wazazi*, had emerged within the ranks of the Sicangus (Hyde 1961: 56). Its principal territorial range hugged the southern edge of the Hills between the headwaters of the White River and the forks of the Cheyenne, an area within easy access to the region of the Buffalo Gap and Wind Cave (DeMallie 1975:36).

B. Those Who Remained

As explained previously, the Arapahos were well established in the Black Hills by the end of the eighteenth century, occupying locations along the north and south forks of the Cheyenne River (Fowler 2001:841). Indeed, during the last decade of the eighteenth century, they appear to have replaced the Kiowas as the dominant group in the southern Black Hills. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, however, more of them were moving to the rich bison ranges along the Platte River at locations immediately south and west of the Hills (Gussow 1974:75-76; Fowler 2001:840). As the Arapahos started to move away from the Hills, larger numbers of Cheyennes were occupying the locations their allies vacated. According to Cheyenne oral traditions recorded by George Bird Grinnell (1972:1:12-13), the Cheyennes first journeyed into the Black Hills on hunting expeditions in the last half of the eighteenth century, and they probably did so in the company of their Arapaho and Arikara allies, who regularly hunted in and around the Black Hills (Shakespeare 1971:27). Eventually, more and more of their people began to stay in the area over longer periods of time until the early nineteenth century when the Black Hills became the center of their territorial range (Grinnell 1906:15).

The Cheyennes were well established at locations in and around the Black Hills when Lewis and Clark traveled through the region, even though some Cheyennes maintained locations closer to the Missouri River. In fact, the map drawn by Lewis and Clark indicates that they were the most populous nation in the Black Hills (Berthong 1963:15). Their dominance of the region continued into the next decade. John Bradbury's journal (1966:139-140, 176) entry for June 17, 1811 simply reiterated what Lewis and Clark found, namely, that the Cheyennes had no fixed area of settlement but traveled the Black Hills country at the headwaters of the Cheyenne River. It also confirmed that the Cheyennes continued to play an important middleman role in the intertribal trade, carrying the horses, peltries, hides, and meat they acquired from tribes who lived beyond the Black Hills to their European American, Lakota, Arikara, and Mandan trade partners on the Missouri River (Jablow 1951:56-60). In the same year, Henry Breckenridge (in Thwaites 1966:5:92) wrote that the Cheyennes resided on the headwaters of the Cheyenne River, and that they traded with the Arikaras and the Spanish. In February of 1813, when John C. Luttig arrived in the area, he also reported that the Cheyennes had considerable quantities of skins to exchange with the traders and their village hosts (in Drumm 1964:55; Hurt 1974:167-168).

Many Cheyennes remained in regions north of the Black Hills during this period (Grinnell 1972:1:30). Yet, it is equally clear that, in the company of their Arapaho allies, others were moving beyond the Black Hills to the valley of the Platte River. By 1812, a large segment of the Arapahos were firmly established on the Platte and beginning to move as far south as the Arkansas River in the company of some of their Kiowa friends (Berthong 1963:19; Gussow 1974: 75-76). Some even ranged as far south as Texas (Fowler 2001:840-842). In 1819, Dr. Edwin James and Captain John R. Bell, members of the Stephen H. Long Expedition, reported a large

number of Arapahos and a small band of Cheyennes bringing British trade goods from the Missouri River, to an intertribal trading encampment along Cherry Creek near the present site of Denver, Colorado (Berthong 1963:20-21; Gussow 1974:31, 45). A year later, in 1821, Jacob Fowler again reported a sizable presence of Arapahos and Cheyennes at a large encampment of Kiowas, Plains Apaches, and Comanches on the Arkansas River (Berthong 1963:21). This written evidence, along with tribal oral traditions (Bent in Hyde 1968:31-57; Iron Teeth in Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:1-9) indicates that in the 1820s some of the Arapahos and the Cheyennes were beginning to split into southern and northern divisions (Jablow 1951:62-65). While the southern branches largely abandoned the Black Hills region, living, hunting, and trading in areas between the Platte and Arkansas rivers, the northern Arapahos and Cheyennes remained in the environs of the Black Hills, with some concentrated on their western flanks towards the Platte River and others located on the eastern side towards the Missouri (Grinnell 1972:1:9-40). The historic record also reveals that, as in the past, both tribes not only jointly held the same territorial ranges but also shared them in common with other tribes including some of the Atsinas who occasionally joined them from Montana.

In 1825, when Atkinson and O'Fallon (1825: 606) came up the Missouri to negotiate a peace treaty between the United States and the tribal nations of the region, they wrote a letter to James Barbeau of the War Department, stating that the Cheyennes inhabited the river that bears their name from its mouth to the Black Hills. They estimated that the Cheyenne population in the area was about 3000 people, that they traded at the mouth of Cherry Creek, and that their principal hunting grounds were towards the Black Hills. In their travels up the Missouri in the summer of 1825 to treat with the local tribes, they dispatched several messengers to find the Cheyennes who were reported in the neighborhood of the "Black Hills" or "Black Mountains" (Jensen and Hutchins 2001:101, 119).[5] They encountered bands of Cheyennes at a number of different locations along the Missouri from the mouth of the Bad River where they encamped with the Oglalas for treaty deliberations, to the Arikara village on the Grand River, and onto a location across the river from Warrenconne Creek in present-day North Dakota (Jenkins and Hutchins 2001:118, 119, 120, 166). Notwithstanding the movement of some Cheyennes to the Platte and Arkansas, an impressive number still remained on the eastern edge of the Black Hills living and traveling among groups of Lakotas and Arikaras.

It was during the 1820s that George Bird Grinnell (1972:1:9) and E. Admonson Hoebel (1960:9) claim the Cheyennes and Sutaios began to merge into one sociopolitical body, although Thomas Weist (1977:24) argues that they did not camp together or intermarry until 1830. Written records on the Sutaios are hard to find in the early historic record, and it is not clear with whom earlier traders identified them. In this same decade, whatever hostilities once existed between the Cheyennes and Lakotas were now localized and situated within a larger framework of peace. As historical records (Atkinson and O'Fallon 1929:27; Hyde 1937:33-34) and tribal oral traditions (Bent in Hyde 1968:25-26) reveal, the Cheyennes and Lakotas began to join forces to route the Crows from the Little Missouri and Powder River regions. George Bent (in Hyde 1968: 25-26) recalls a famous story of a how a party of Bowstring Society soldiers lost their lives in a deadly fight with the Crows around 1819, and how the following year, the Lakotas and Cheyennes assembled in the Black Hills and set out to the Tongue River to seek revenge by destroying a Crow camp and taking its women and children captive. He also describes another battle with the

[5] Oddly, the editors (Jensen and Hutchins 2001:101n105) of Henry Atkinson and Stephen Kearny's journals of the expedition assert that the Black Hills named in these accounts refer to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains not the Black Hills proper. This makes no sense given what we know about the locations and movements of the Cheyennes who were widely dispersed at this point in history in a region that extended from the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains and that most certainly included the Black Hills proper.

Crows that took place on Horse Creek in Wyoming when the Cheyennes were camped there some years later (Bent in Hyde 1968: 26-28). Other versions of these same stories are found in George Bird Grinnell's book *The Fighting Cheyennes* (1956: 26-32).

The complexity of intertribal relations during this time is revealed in another story that George Bent (in Hyde 1968:28-30) recalled and that Grinnell (1956: 2-34) recorded as well. Sometime around 1826, a band of Cheyennes was encamped along the South Platte near Greeley, Colorado with Arapahos and some Atsinas who had joined them from Montana, when a group of Crows arrived and set up their camp two miles away. While feasting their Arapaho and Atsina friends, the Crows demanded that the Cheyennes give up a Crow child who had been captured several years earlier. The Cheyennes refused, and the Crows threatened to start a fight hoping that their Arapaho and Atsina friends would join them. They declined and a battle ensued in which the Cheyennes, Arapahos and Atsinas joined forces against the Crows and their long-standing Kiowa friends, who were returning to the Arkansas having visited with the Crows in Montana the previous summer. This presumably began the period when relations between the Arapahos and Cheyennes on one side and the Kiowas, Plains Apaches, and Comanches on the other broke down and developed into a full-scale war which did not end until 1840 (Berthong 1963:23; Grinnell 1972:1:35-69; Weist 1977:42; Coel 1981:14; Fowler 2001:842).

By this time, most of the Arapahos appear to have been well south and west of the Black Hills, with their primary territories stretching between the south and north forks of the Platte River (Shakespeare 1971:37-38,71; Gussow 1974:47-48; Fowler 1982:21-23, 2001:841). Even though Zachary Gussow (1974:31-35) maintained that the Arapahos still had control of the Black Hills as late as 1827, this does not correspond with much of the historical record, which reveals not only a large Cheyenne population in the Hills, but a substantial Lakota presence as well. It can be conceded, however, that the Arapahos were still the largest population on the western side of the Black Hills because they clearly had a dominant presence on the plains north of Fort Laramie (Fowler 1982:21-23). Rufus Sage described their western boundary as the Medicine Bow Range in Wyoming, and in the same period, John Fremont described them as ranging all along the Platte and the eastern flanks of the Rockies as far north as the present day town of Casper, Wyoming (Ibid: 22-23). Throughout much of this area, they traveled in the company of their Cheyenne and Lakota allies (Gussow 1974:78). The Arapahos' territorial range had clearly shifted west by this time, although some probably remained along the upper reaches of the White River in the midst of resident Cheyenne and Lakota bands.

Meanwhile, back on the Missouri River, Maximilian, Prince of Wied, reported in 1832 that the Black Hills were the area where the Cheyennes dwelled (in Thwaites 1966:22:33), and eight years later, Father De Smet visited a Cheyenne village at the eastern base of the Hills (in Thwaites 1966:22:136). Iron Teeth (Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:4) and several other Cheyennes (Grinnell 1972:1:252-254) maintained that some of their fellow tribespeople continued to practice horticulture at locations on the eastern side of the Black Hills during this time period. In fact, some Cheyennes were reported to still farm near the Missouri River as late as 1833 and to trade there until 1850 (Grinnell 1972:1:30; Culbertson in McDermott 1952:52, 67). Older Cheyennes also remembered a Sun Dance taking place at this time in the valley of the Cheyenne River (Moore, J. 1987:32). These records indicate that part of the Cheyenne population was still holding onto their old territories, even though they were being surrounded by growing numbers of Lakotas. They also reveal that some Cheyennes still traveled back and forth between the Black Hills and the Arkansas River to acquire horses and trade in the Mexican southwest (Iron Teeth in Marquis and Limbaugh 1973:5).

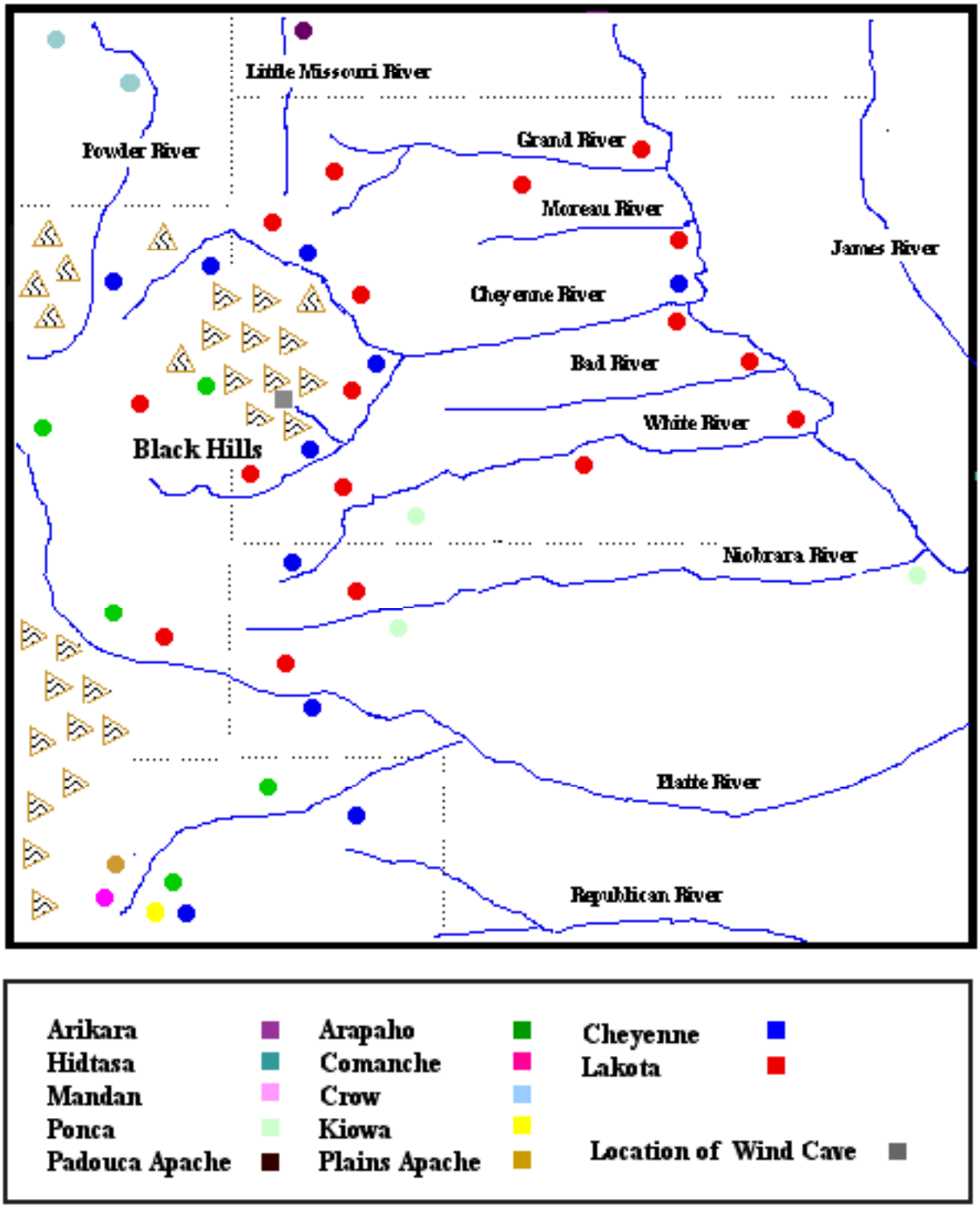
Following John Moore's reconstructions of Cheyenne band histories, it is possible to deduce the general whereabouts of the Cheyennes in relationship to the Black Hills in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The *Omisis* and *Totoimana* divisions of the Cheyenne, who had a long history of intermarriage with the Lakotas, lived on the northern and western edge of the Hills and eventually occupied a large swath of territory that extended between the Black Hills and the Powder River. The *Masikota* band of Cheyennes inhabited areas southeast of the Black Hills along the White River where some of them intermarried with the Oglala and Sicangu Lakotas. The *Hisiometaneo* lived along the upper reaches of the Niobrara River, and they also had close ties with the Oglalas and Sicangus (Grinnell 1972:2:68). The early locations of the *Sutaios* are difficult to reconstruct, although given where most of them eventually settled in the reservation era, they probably covered much of the same area as the *Omisis*. They also appear to have been divided into northern and southern branches, with some occupying areas near the southeastern Black Hills until 1877. The main body of the Cheyenne proper, which includes the *Tsistsistas*, *Heviksnipahis*, *Hevhaitaneo*, *Oivimana*, and *Hotametaneo*, made up the core group of Cheyenne who occupied the forks of the Cheyenne River from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century. They were the ones who moved to locations between the forks of the Platte River, and they apparently did so as a block in a series of successive moves between 1815 and 1825. They were also the segment of the Cheyennes who appear to have had some of the most intimate and enduring connections with the Arapahos (Moore, J. 1987: 229-235).

In 1849, Thomas Fitzpatrick, the first Indian agent for the upper Platte and Arkansas rivers, noted as much when he wrote that growing numbers of Lakotas were pushing the Cheyennes farther south into areas the Arapahos occupied (Berthong 1963:24). Yet, he also claimed, "The Cheyennes at that time were living on the south side of the Missouri River, between the Cheyenne and White rivers, and along the Black Hills" (*quoted from* Berthong 2964: 24). On Francis Parkman's 1849 map, published in Mason Wade's edition (1947) of his journals, a small group of Cheyenne was still located in the southern Black Hills, but the larger body was placed outside the Hills between the south fork of the Platte and the Arkansas. The Arapahos were located in the same region but in areas south of the Arkansas. On this map, no Arapahos appear in the Black Hills.

After the Cheyennes and their Arapaho allies made peace with the Kiowas, Plains Apaches, and Comanches in 1840, these tribes sometimes met with each other to trade and conduct ceremonies on the South Fork of the Platte River. Rufus Sage described a large convocation in 1842 that drew together all of the above five tribes plus Lakotas and even Blackfeet (and possibly Atsina) from Montana (Gussow 1974:44). In this period, more waves of Arapahos, Cheyennes, and also a few Lakotas moved out of the regions near the Black Hills to establish their primary territories in areas below the South Fork of the Platte. Like the Kiowas, Plains Apaches, and Comanches before them, the southern Cheyenne-Arapahos were attracted to this area not only for the new trading opportunities it offered, but also because it contained rich grazing lands for their horses and good hunting grounds where bison were still plentiful. Indeed, it was probably these opportunities and the declining populations of bison in the northeast as much as the pressure of the incoming Lakotas that brought more and more Cheyennes and Arapahos south (Mooney 1907:376-377; Scott 1907:558; Berthong 1963:25-27; Fowler 2001:842-843; Moore, Liberty, and Straus 2001:864-865).

By the 1840s, the Arapahos and Cheyennes were divided into two geographically separate and politically distinct branches with different ethnic identities (Mooney 1907:376-377; Fowler 2001:842; Moore 1976b; Moore, Liberty, and Straus 2001:865). The Arapahos referred to their northern branch as *Nenebi.neno?* [Northern People], while the southerners were known as *No.kho.seinémnó?* [Sage People] (Fowler2001:862). The Cheyennes referred to their northern

FIGURE 6. Reported Tribal Locations, circa 1835



branch as *NotaméohmésEhese* [Northern Eaters], sometimes shortened as *OhmésEhese*, and the southerners as *He´vAhetaneo?* [Roped People] or *Sowonia*, [Southerners] (Moore, Liberty and Straus 2001: 882-883). After the 1840s, the histories of the two branches of the Arapahos and Cheyennes follow divergent courses. Even though the two groups continued to come together over common interests, cultural traditions, and family ties, they were now situated in very different spheres of social, economic, and political influence and their lives started to follow different paths as well. In fact, many of the southern Cheyennes and Arapahos had become so geographically removed from the Black Hills that some in the younger generations no longer had direct knowledge of them, only their parents and grandparents' recollections of what life had been like there in times past. Some of the southern Cheyenne bands did return periodically to their former homelands in the Black Hills to trade and meet with their northern relatives, to conduct religious observances at their sacred mountain, Bear Butte, and to procure specialized lithic and plant resources (Moore, J. 1981:14). But generally speaking, the Hills were no longer a part of their primary territorial range. In direct contrast, the Hills remained well within the territorial boundaries of the northern Arapahos and Cheyennes. Even though both tribes now lived in areas increasingly populated by Lakotas, the Hills were still considered a part of their homeland and an integral part of their territory as later oral histories, government documents, and ethnographic writings reveal (Moore, J. 1987; Powell 1969, 1982).

C. Those Who Arrived

Although the Lakotas had already arrived on the high plains of the Missouri River by the late eighteenth century, gradually establishing hunting grounds and camping sites on tributaries leading to the Black Hills, they had not built a large settlement base in and around the Hills. Until the 1820s, much of the eastern side of the Black Hills region was held by Cheyennes, while the western flanks still remained in the hands of the Arapahos. As Lakotas entered the Hills to hunt and camp, they traveled in areas occupied by these other two tribal nations. Even after the 1820s, when the sheer size of the Lakota population far outnumbered the Cheyennes and Arapahos, the Lakotas never gained any real exclusive occupancy of the Black Hills. Cheyenne and Arapaho camps were always present, interspersed among those of various Lakota affiliations until 1877 when all American Indians were forcibly removed.

1. 1807-1829

In the years before 1830, many of the Lakotas still maintained their winter encampments along the lower portions of tributaries that fed the Missouri River from the Black Hills country. There is little doubt, however, that they used the upper reaches of these rivers as hunting grounds, a pattern commonly followed by the Poncas, Arikaras, and Cheyennes in the previous century (Clow 1995:262). It is equally clear that more bands were now wintering at the southeastern base of the Hills in association with the Cheyennes who were the principal tribal nation in the area.

From 1807 to 1819, there is clear evidence that the *Sicangu* [Brule or Burnt Thigh] Lakotas were well-established along the White River from its mouth to its headwaters, and that some were also using the neighboring Niobrara River as a hunting ground and a location to capture wild horses (Clyman in Camp 1960:16-17; Hyde 1961:17; Hurt 1974:179, 181, 199, 201, 204, 206; Cheney 1979:19; Clow 1995). There is also good documentation that the *Oglala* [Cast-on-own or Scatter Their Own] Lakotas controlled most of the course of the Bad River, and that they had a sizable presence on the White and Cheyenne rivers as well (Clyman in Camp 1960:16-17; Hurt 1974:200). Of the various Lakota or Teton divisions, the Oglalas were the ones most likely to have reached the base of the Black Hills before 1820 (Hyde 1937:20). The *Minneconjou* [Plant

near water] and *Itazipco* [Sans Arc or No Bow] Lakotas were above the forks of the Cheyenne, which means both of these divisions were within striking distance of the Black Hills as well (Hyde 1961:4). Some of the *Hunkpapa* [End of the Horn] and *Sihasapa* [Blackfeet] Lakotas were moving towards the headwaters of the Grand River (Hyde 1937:39-40), although much of their territory was still located east of the Missouri River. Despite a winter count marking 1828 as the first year the Hunkpapas camped at Bear Butte (Swift Dog in Praus 1962:13), this site was still outside their primary territorial range.

Following George Hyde's reconstruction, the above summary takes into account the extended movements Lakotas were making once they were firmly established at locations on the west side of the Missouri River. This gives a picture that is slightly different from the written record, but again, we must remember that the eyewitness accounts of Europeans and Americans took place along the Missouri River at a considerable distance from the Black Hills. While a few traders were establishing posts close to the Black Hills at places such as the forks of the Cheyenne River, none of them left written records of their stays. Therefore, our impression of what was happening at this time is still slanted towards the Lakotas who were observed at locations removed from the Black Hills proper.

For several decades after the Lewis and Clark expedition, there is little documentary information on the whereabouts of the Lakotas beyond the Missouri. Although many traders traveled the area, they did not leave any writings of their experiences (Hurt 1974:176). Most of the information for this period comes from travelers who passed through the area without any extended stay. Manuel Lisa's 1811 expedition up the Missouri was accompanied by the traveler, Henry Breckinridge, who left a journal (in Thwaites 1966) with brief comments about the tribes he observed along his route of travel from April 27 to July 6. These included Lakotas, Cheyennes, Arikaras, and Mandans who were noted at their usual and accustomed locations (Hurt 1974:177-178). In the same year, John Bradbury, a naturalist who traveled with the Astoria expedition, left an account (1966), and map of his travels, both of which contain information that is consistent with what Lewis and Clark gathered five years earlier (Hurt 1974:179-181, 199, 204). A year later, John Luttwig (in Drumm 1964), an employee of the Missouri Fur Company, accompanied Lisa's expedition and wrote a journal that again reiterates what others reported as locations for the Lakotas, Arikaras, Cheyennes, Poncas, and Mandans (Hurt 1974:182-183).

When Paul Wilhelm, the Duke of Württemberg, traveled the Missouri in 1823, he wrote a journal with several interesting entries. First, while ascending Ponca Creek, he encountered a Ponca and Sicangu war party that had just returned from a battle with the Pawnee who lived on the middle reaches of the Platte. When he came to the mouth of the White River, he came across some Yanktons who were on a hunting expedition. This is one of the earliest pieces of evidence for the presence of Dakota speaking populations west of the Missouri. He met with Joshua Pilcher, a local trader, who told him that the "friendly" Lakotas had gone to the Black Hills to hunt because game was scarce down river (Hurt 1974:187), and he also learned that Poncas and Sicangus were hunting together on the Niobrara River (Hurt 1974:203-204; Howard, J. 1965:28). Another source for this period, Joshua Pilcher's 1824 testimony before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, contains more evidence that the Lakotas were in the Black Hills. He told Congress that on the west side of the Missouri the Lakotas ranged over the valleys of the Niobrara, White, and Bad rivers "as far as the Black Mountains in which some of these streams rise and as far north as the head of the Little Missouri, above the Mandans" (Pilcher 1824: 453).

A year later, when Atkinson and O'Fallen came to the Missouri River, their accounts clearly suggest that some of the Lakotas were residing near the Black Hills. They report that the *Oohenonpas* [Two Kettle] or Broken Arrow band was camped at Fort Kiowa and were ostracized

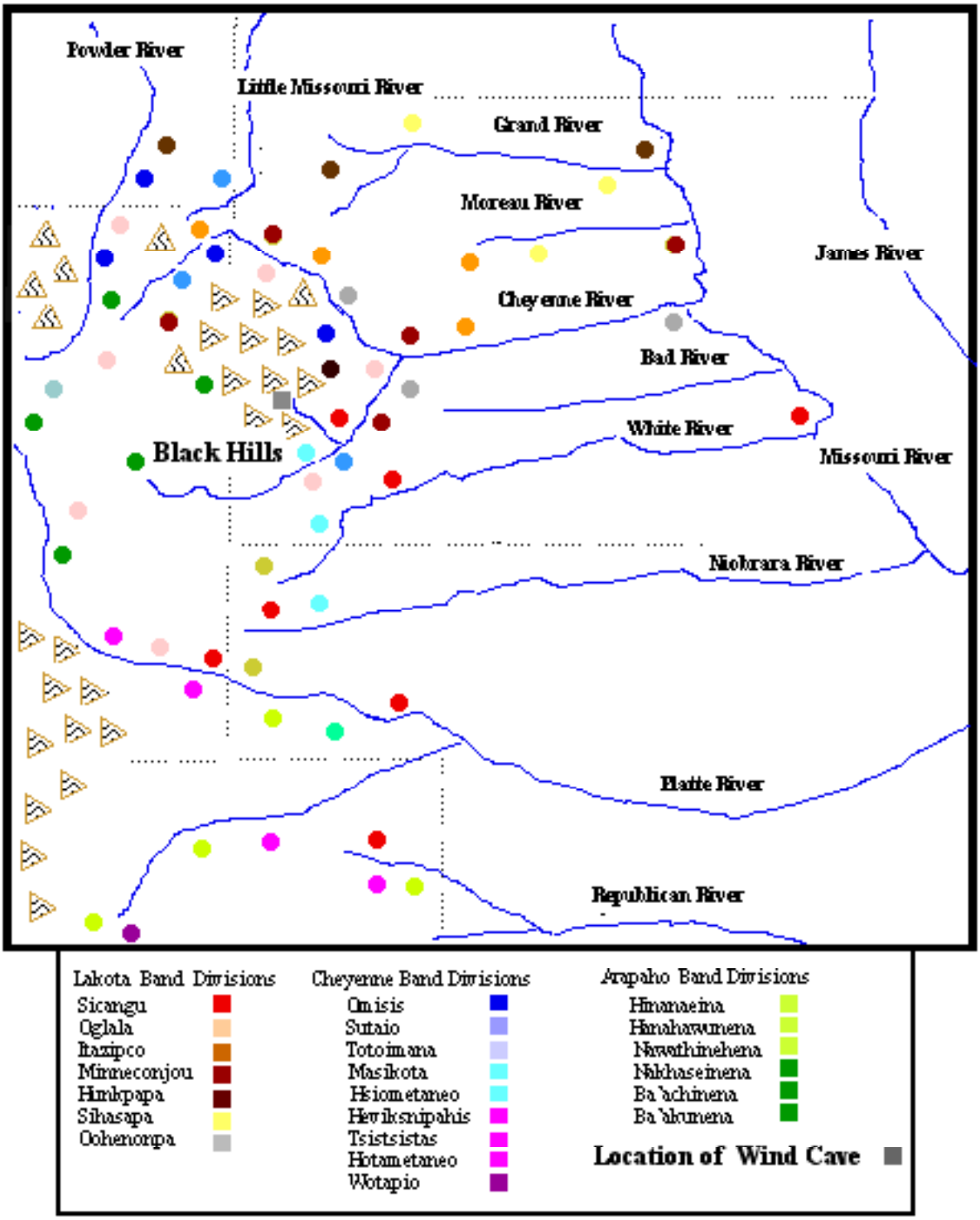
by the other Lakotas (Atkinson and O'Fallon 1929:21). Oglala camps were located on the Bad River six miles west of its mouth (Atkinson and O'Fallon 1929:26-27; Atkinson in Jensen and Hutchins 2001:115, 118; Kearny in Jensen and Hutchins 2001:115, 116, 119), but their usual travels extended along this river to the Black Hills (Atkinson and O'Fallon to James Barber, 7 November 1825:606). The Soanes (probably Minneconjous and Itazipcos) were reported to camp thirty miles upstream on the Bad River (Atkinson and O'Fallon 1929: 21, 29; Atkinson in Jensen and Hutchins 2001:113, 119, 120) and also on the Cheyenne River fifty miles above its mouth (Atkinson and O'Fallon 1825:607, 1929:21,29,169; Kearny in Jensen and Hutchins 2001:124). Another Soane group, the Hunkpapas, were situated near the mouth of the Grand River (1929: 31), but the bulk of their territory was described as extending from the Missouri east to the Minnesota River (Atkinson and O'Fallon 1825:607). Atkinson and O'Fallon (1825:607) also record the presence of Tetons on the White River "as far back as the Black Hills" but do not identify their divisional affiliation. Hyde (1937:39) and Hurt (1974:204), however, conclude that these were Sicangus. In their 1825 letter to James Barber, they wrote that the Black Hills were the western limit of Lakota territory.

In their entries for the year 1828-29, six Lakota winter counts record the presence of Lakota camps in the vicinity of Bear Butte (Howard, J. 1960:368). This confirms other observations that the Lakotas were situated within range of the Black Hills by 1830. During the same time period, it is important to note that accounts from the Long Expedition give no evidence of a Lakota presence beyond the Black Hills -- a situation that would change dramatically in coming decades (Hurt, 1974:198). Nevertheless, the American Horse winter count reports that some Lakotas were traveling as far south as the Sand Hills in Nebraska to capture wild horses (American Horse in Mallery 1987:82-83).

In the years between 1807 and 1829, only the Cheyennes stood in the path of Lakota migration to the Black Hills, and while this certainly must have slowed their movement when hostility prevailed between the two tribes, the Cheyennes' presence was no longer an obstacle once a general peace was established, probably sometime after 1813, because Luttig writes that they were still stealing horses from the Cheyennes at this time (Hurt 1974:184). A decade later, however, Atkinson and O'Fallon (1825:605-608) write that the Lakotas were at peace with the Cheyennes. In this era, the Kiowas were no longer a major threat either, even though Lakota winter counts identify a hostile encounter with them in 1814-1815 (Kindred in Beckwith, M. 1930:357; Blue Thunder in Howard, J. 1965b:360-361; American Horse in Mallery 1987:82-83; White Bull in Howard, J. 1998:14).[6] Once the Kiowas abandoned their areas of occupation on the southern edge of the Hills, these locations were now open to Lakota expansion. This was especially true after 1823, when Sicangu bands were coexisting peacefully with the Poncas, intermarrying and fighting with them against the Pawnees (DeMallie 1975:36). Farther north, the eastern side of the Black Hills was also open as far as Bear Butte through the Lakota's peaceful ties with the Cheyennes, but the area of the Little Missouri River and beyond was the ground on which the Lakotas and Cheyennes were still waging war with the Crows. Battles between the Lakotas and Crows are regularly noted for this period in winter counts and the documents of traders and explorers (Atkinson and O'Fallon 1825:607-608; High Hawk in Curtis 1907-30:3:175, 176; Kindred in Beckwith, M. 1930:357-359; Swift Dog in Praus 1962:11; Hurt 1974:199; Howard, J. 1979:29; White Bull in Howard, J. 1998:17). By 1823, the combined forces of Lakotas and Cheyennes were able to take the headwaters of the Little Missouri River

[6] There are conflicting reports on the identity of this enemy. Some accounts suggest that the enemy killed was a Crow, and one even suggests that he was a Cheyenne, but the vast majority identify him with the name the Lakotas commonly gave the Kiowas (Howard, J. 1965b:360-361).

FIGURE 7. Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Lakota Band Division Locations, circa 1850



and begin their penetration into the heart of Crow territory along the Powder, Tongue, and Yellowstone Rivers (Ewers 1938:88). But this area was still probably not safe enough to bring encampments with children and the elderly.

2. 1830-1850

Between 1830 and 1840, most of the Lakotas were moving away from their locations on the Missouri River. The Lakota's southerly and westerly movements, according to Hyde (1937:45, 1961:29), were encouraged by the presence of new trading posts near the Black Hills and on the Platte River in areas with richer grazing lands for their horses and better hunting grounds. In the early 1830s, many Oglalas and Sicangus were still trading at posts near the Missouri, including Fort Pierre and Fort Tecumseh. Once posts were established for the Sicangus on the White River, another for the Miniconjous near the forks of the Cheyenne, and a third for the Oglalas just east of Bear Butte, many no longer needed to make the long-distance trip to the Missouri to trade (Hyde 1937:41; Clow 1995:264). In time, posts would appear near Horse Creek and at other spots along the Platte River directly south and west of the Hills. In 1834, William Sublette and Robert Campbell opened a post on the Platte where Fort Laramie would eventually be built, and within a year, about two thousand Lakotas were reported to have visited this post (Price, C. 1996:21-22).

Richard White (1978:333-334) disputes Hyde's assertion that Oglalas under Bull Bear's leadership came to the Platte because of the presence of traders. He claims company records only reveal that traders recognized the Oglalas and Sicangus' hunting grounds were shifting in a southerly direction because bison were beginning to withdraw from locations near the Missouri River. Shortages of bison were reported in the winter of 1832-1833, but this was temporary and due to an exceptionally warm winter (Clow 1995). Seven years later, however, the missionary Stephen J. Riggs saw few bison on his journey to Fort Pierre. As bison numbers declined east of the Missouri, more Lakotas moved west to hunt them (Hyde 1961:29; Parkman in Feltskog 1969:200; Price, C. 1996:8). Even on the Platte River, there were reports of scarcity after 1840. In 1842, a grasshopper plague destroyed the grasslands and caused starvation among the Lakotas, who were greatly alarmed by the disappearance of their herds (Price, C. 1996:49). Most of the reports of dwindling bison numbers along the Platte and Missouri rivers before 1840 appear to have been the result of local weather conditions, especially drought and/or unseasonably warm winters, rather than the irreversible and long term forces, climatic or otherwise, that came later.

The truth of what motivated the Lakotas to move farther west probably lies somewhere in the middle. On the one hand, it is clear that Lakotas were pushed westward as game became more erratic and scarce near the valley of the Missouri River. On the other hand, there is no question that they were also being drawn west because of new opportunities, which included the proximity of traders to prime bison ranges, better grazing conditions for their horses, and closer access to horse-rich tribes, such as the Pawnees and Kiowas, whose herds could be easily reached and raided (Bray 1994:178; Price, C. 1996:21-22). William Bordeaux (1929:192), a Sicangu historian, clearly implies that his people wintered along the Platte and in regions farther south because of their more temperate winter climate. Whatever the reasons for the Lakotas' continued western migration, which probably reached its height in the 1830s, it led in no small degree to a period of great economic prosperity and independence (Ewers 1938:83).

By the 1830s, the historic record of Lakota locations is not dissimilar to what was reported for the Cheyennes and Arapahos. The German traveler, Maximilian, Prince of Wied, who made a tour of the Missouri River in 1832-1833, described Lakota territory as extending over the Black Hills to the Arkansas River, to the Rocky Mountains, and to the Yellowstone River (in Thwaites

1966:1:305). A few years later, 1835-1837, the missionary Samuel Parker (Hurt 1974:232-233) described Lakota territories as reaching from the Mississippi to the Black Hills, south to the Platte and over to the Big Horn Mountains. Although both probably exaggerated the extent of the Lakotas' primary territories at this point in history, Maximilian more so than Parker, they were correct in their assumption that the Lakotas' territorial reach had extended well beyond the Black Hills during the 1830s.

There is little doubt that the Lakotas had clearly established themselves on the eastern side of the Black Hills by 1830. There is also no question that when they reached this area other tribes were still present, including the Cheyennes and also the Poncas, who were located on Maximilian's map in areas north of the Niobrara River (Hurt 1974:227). In 1832 and 1835, the letter books and journals of the Fort Pierre and Fort Tecumseh trading posts on the Missouri provide fairly detailed information on the whereabouts of the Lakotas. Some of the Sicangus were trading at posts on the White and Bad rivers (Deland and Robinson 1918:95n12, 112n51, 160). Yet, in the same period, George Hyde (1961:28) indicates that a portion of the Sicangu moved from the White to the Platte River in search of a more plentiful food supply. The Oglalas were trading at posts on the White and Bad rivers too (Deland and Robinson 1918:160), but they also appeared on the Platte (Hyde 1937:46-47; Clow 1995:264). In 1835, missionaries traveling to Oregon along the Platte River encountered a large group of Lakotas, probably Oglalas, who were going to the Black Hills to hunt and trade (Bushnell 1922:68). Returning to the year 1832, some of the Minneconjous were reported on the east side of the Missouri River, while others were with Sicangus and Oglalas on the White River and still more were on the Cheyenne and Moreau rivers (Deland and Robinson 1918:121-122, 141, 234). Even though some Sihasapas remained east of the Missouri (Deland and Robinson 1918:159), Hyde (1937:38-39) claims that the main body was already halfway up the Grand River with the Hunkpapas.

In 1839, Joseph Nicollet (De Mallie 1975:353-356, 1976:260-261) offered the most detailed account of a Lakota presence in the Black Hills. For the Soane divisions, he reported the Minneconjou with one hundred and eighty lodges on the Cheyenne River and in the Black Hills under the leadership of Red Fish, White Swan, and Noble White Crow. This is also reported in a Lakota winter count (Mallory1987:117). Led by Four White Bears, the *Wanonwakteninan* [Oohenonpas or Two Kettles], with eighty lodges, were situated on the Belle Fourche River and at Bear Butte. The Itazipco, who were headed by Crow Feather and Elk Head, were found on Cherry Creek and the Cheyenne, and Moreau rivers with one hundred and ten lodges. The Sihasapa, with one hundred lodges, were on the Grand River, and the Hunkpapa, also with one hundred lodges, were at locations from the Grand to the Cannonball River. For the Oglala, he identified the locations of three different bands, each with one hundred lodges. The *Onkp'hatina* [Lodges at the end of the circle] led by Yellowish Eagle, and *Ku-Inyan* [*Ku iya*, or Gives Rock] under the direction of Mad Bear were reported from the Black Hills to the Platte River. The *Oyurpe* [*Oyuxpe* or Unloads], led by White Earrings, were located principally in the Black Hills. Finally, the four bands of Sicangu were given the following locations: the *Cokatowanyan* [Middle Village], with ninety lodges, were on the sources of the Niobrara and White rivers and at the White Buttes near Crawford, Nebraska; the *Wazazi* (also known as *Wazaze* or Fringed), a band of mixed Ponca ancestry with seventy lodges, were under the direction of Black Horn and traveled between the White and Cheyenne rivers; the *Minishanan* [Red Water], led by Red Water, had sixty lodges and traveled in the Sand Hills along the Niobrara River; and the *Kiuksa* [Those Who Divide], also in the Sands Hills, had sixty lodges under the leadership of Two Elks.

It is clear that the Lakotas were well established in the Black Hills by the end of the 1830s with several divisions wintering at locations near the foot of these mountains. Indeed, we can say that at this point in history the Lakotas were not only the largest and most dominant group in the

region but the Black Hills had become the center of their territorial universe as well (Larson 1997:50-51). We can also conclude that some of the Lakotas, especially those located along the Platte, had abandoned their former haunts along the Missouri and no longer used this area as a location for trade. Instead the southern divisions of the Lakotas, the Oglalas and Sicangus, were taking their commerce to the upper reaches of the Cheyenne, White, Niobrara, and Platte rivers. Most of the other Lakotas, however, were still east, but many of them were probably using posts at the base of the Black Hills too, rather than traveling to the Missouri to trade. In later decades, we find little about the bands who remained on the eastern side of the Hills and who were largely removed from the catastrophic course of events that would engulf their relatives at locations south and west of the Hills along the Platte River.

Until the 1830s, Dakota-speaking populations remained largely in territories east of the Missouri River, although some of the Sisseton, Yankton, and Yanktonnai crossed the river to hunt and trade (Hurt 1974:187). After hostilities erupted between Inkpaduta and his followers in Iowa, some of the Wahpekute Dakotas joined the Yankton Dakotas and settled along the Missouri River. In later years, these Wahpekute were reported in the Black Hills among bands of Lakota, and in the 1870s, they were present at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. In its aftermath, most of them fled with Sitting Bull to Canada, where many of Inkpaduta's descendents now live. Some, however, eventually returned to the United States and settled on the Spirit Lake Reservation in North Dakota (Albers 1974; 2001a). With the decline of the fur-trade and the disappearance of bison in regions east of the Missouri River, some of the Dakotas started to push their settlements farther west. By 1837, Yankton territorities were reported in locations west of the Missouri along the White and Niobrara rivers (Denig in Ewers 1961:213; Horr 1974:313; Woolworth 1974:136, 145; Bray and Bray 1976:254). By contrast, their northern relatives, the Yanktonnais, still remained on the east side of the Missouri at this time (Woolworth 1974:52; DeMallie 2001b).

During the decades of the 1830s and 1840s, the Lakotas were fighting wars on two fronts. In the northwest, their hostilities with the Crows and Shoshones continued and even escalated with many battles now being waged in their home territory, including locations at Bear Butte in 1830-31 and the Buffalo Gap in 1831-32 (Good in Mallery 1893:319; Kindred in Beckwith, M. 1930: 359-362; Swift Dog in Praus 1962:13; Parkman in Feltskog 1969:120; American Horse and Cloud-Shield in Mallery 1987:114-115). At this time, the Lakotas and their Arapaho and Cheyenne allies were pushing their territorial reach to the Crow's coveted hunting ranges on the Powder and Tongue rivers (Gussow 1974:68). To the south, hostilities with the Pawnees also intensified, not only because the Pawnee's large horse herds were a favorite target for Lakota raiding activity but also because the Lakotas' territorial range was starting to infringe on the Pawnees' hunting grounds along the upper reaches of the Republican River (Dodge 1959:130-131, 373).

In the next decade, the territory covered by the Lakotas continued to expand. Reports of their presence in areas dominated by Cheyennes and Arapahos west of the Black Hills and north of Fort Laramie became common. Likewise, more references appear listing them in Arapaho and Cheyenne encampments at various locations between the Platte and Arkansas rivers. In 1842, when John Fremont's expedition reached Fort Laramie, several camps of Lakotas were seen. They were described as allies of the Cheyennes and Arapahos, participating with them in joint raids against Crows, Shoshones, and American emigrants (Hurt 1974:220-221). By 1846, the Lakotas were the dominant population at Fort Laramie, with the Oglalas and Sicangus making up the largest numbers. Some bands of Minneconjous were reported there as well (Parkman in Feltskog 1969:135, 139). Although some Lakotas traveled and even moved into areas dominated by their allies south of the Platte River, their numbers remained comparatively small at these

locations. Conversely, Arapahos and Cheyennes still remained, albeit in smaller numbers, in areas of the Black Hills now dominated by the Lakotas (Gussow1974:37).

In contrast to conventional understandings, the process by which Lakotas extended their territorial reach to the Black Hills and beyond was not simply a process of conquest and aggression. It also involved a gradual and incremental movement where the Lakotas entered into areas that they jointly held and protected with the Arapahos and Cheyennes who already lived there. As these two allies moved on in search of new hunting ranges and trading opportunities, the Lakotas became the dominant occupants of the Black Hills, often in areas where small segments of the previous inhabitants remained. Through the intermarriages, which often accompanied these patterns of co-residency, tribally distinct populations sometimes merged into single band communities taking on the identity of the dominant group. This is what appears to have happened to some of the Cheyennes who remained in the Black Hills and eventually became incorporated into the camp circles of the Oglalas as well as to some of the Poncas who became affiliated with the Sicangus. In the process, their separate identities became largely obliterated in the historic record.

In many respects, the decade of the 1840s represents a continuation of earlier historical trends. There were now several trading posts skirting the Black Hills that the Lakotas were reported to use with some regularity (Deland and Robinson 1918:179; Larson 1997:57-58). The 1842 and 1845 Fort Pierre journals and letter books continue to mention the presence of Sicangus on the White River (Deland and Robinson 1918:199), but in 1845, they also indicate the arrival of Minneconjous in the area. Other Minneconjous, however, were listed at Butte D'Ores (Bear Butte), some were on the Platte, and one band was encamped near Fort Pierre. A portion of the Two Kettle division was also at Fort Pierre but others were on the White River (Ibid:206-207). The Hunkpapas and Sihasapas were located at Three Buttes on the Little Missouri River, but some were on the Platte as well. The Oglalas were mostly trading at Horse Creek and at other locations on the Platte River (Ibid:199).

Just as the larger body of Lakotas dispersed and realigned themselves in relation to their Cheyenne and Arapaho allies, they also began to rearrange their affiliations at a divisional level. Unlike earlier decades, when each Lakota division occupied a distinct territorial range that followed one of the Missouri River's western tributaries upstream to the Black Hills, local groups were now reorganizing themselves with little regard to the territorial integrity of the divisions with whom they affiliated. In relation to the changes taking place among the Oglalas, George Hyde (1937:57-58) argues that after the death of Bull Bear in 1842, the group split into factions with each going its separate way. One segment became associated with Cheyennes and Arapahos and hunted southwest of Fort John, while another became aligned with Sicangus and Minneconjous from the Black Hills and hunted southeast of this post. In 1846, there was another separation with the Smoke people moving north and hunting between the Black Hills and the Big Horn Mountains (Hyde 1961:99; Price, C. 1996:25-26). In contrast to the position that Hyde takes, one could argue that this was not simply an example of political factionalism within Oglala ranks, but rather an instance of multiple adaptive strategies emerging under conditions of rapid change. Older alignments were disintegrating and new ones were being formed as Lakotas moved away from their former areas of occupation to search out new territories and trade opportunities. These new alliances not only cut-across the Lakota's own divisional affiliations, but they transcended tribal boundaries as well.

Following the path of their Arapaho and Cheyenne allies, the Lakotas now became more geographically dispersed, but they were also becoming more internally differentiated and specialized. Some bands, who were called *Wagluke* [Loafers], began to establish their principal

settlements near trading posts, marrying their daughters to traders and serving as go-betweens for the bands who focused much of their labor on bison-hunting (Mekeel 1943:188; Hyde 1961:100; Bray 1994:178-179). Some of the bison-hunting bands began to travel more widely, as far south as the Republican River in Kansas and as far north as the Tongue River in Montana, to find hunting grounds where bison were still plentiful (Bordeaux 1929:192; Bray 1994:179; Price, C. 1996:26-27). Other bands, however, stayed behind, remaining in or near the Black Hills and in the valleys of the Cheyenne, White, and Bad Rivers where bison were less abundant but other kinds of game, including antelope, bighorn sheep, elk, and deer, were still plentiful. Differences such as these existed among the Cheyennes and Arapahos as well, and this helps us to understand why some of the bands of these two tribes also remained close to the Black Hills until the reservation era, even when their relatives in other bands were moving to far removed locations in search of the larger herds of bison (Bray 1994:185-186).

Before Lakota lives were disrupted and profoundly changed by the growing presence of foreigners in their midst, Edwin Denig (in Ewers 1961) wrote about their locations and culture prior to 1845 based on his many years of experience as a fur-trader on the Upper Missouri and at Cherry Creek, a tributary of the Cheyenne. West of the Missouri River, he described Sioux territory as extending from the mouth of the Grand River to the head of the Powder River, and from this point it moved along the western side of the Black Hills to Fort Laramie on the Platte and then east to the junction of the Niobrara with the Missouri (Ibid:3). Denig also offered some of the most detailed information to date on the travels and whereabouts of various Lakota divisions.

He described the Sicangus' territorial range as extending from the headwaters of the Niobrara and White rivers to the Bad River. He identified their leader as Clear Blue Earth and their principal enemies as Pawnees and Arikaras. Denig (Ibid:16-19) also reported that due to the emigrations of white people across their country, the Sicangus had suffered more than any other Lakota population the devastating consequences of epidemic disease.

Denig (Ibid:19-21) claimed the Oglalas inhabited a territory that included the Black Hills, extending northeast from Fort Laramie on the Platte to the headwaters of the Bad River and the forks of the Cheyenne. He wrote that The Swan led them, and that their primary enemies were the Crows who they regularly raided for horses. Like the Sicangus, they were now suffering the effects of epidemic disease. Prophetically, he also argued that in due time the Oglalas would start to raid along the Overland Trail and force the government to exterminate them.

The Minneconjous, according to Denig (Ibid:22-23), largely abandoned their locations near the Missouri River due to the absence of bison and traveled the country between Cherry Creek and the Grand River where game was still plentiful. They were led by La Corne Seule, but after his death they divided into many small groups. They were allied with the Oglalas in wars against the Crows, and they also counted the Mandans and Hidatsas as their enemies. In the 1840s, they made peace with the Arikaras from whom they acquired corn in exchange for meat and hides (Ibid:23- 25).

The Hunkpapas, Sihasapas, and Itazipcos often traveled in the same area as the Minneconjous but also inhabited the Moreau, Cannonball, Heart, and Grand rivers (Ibid:25). In later years, their hunting territories extended to the Little Missouri River. Denig also noted that they were little affected by the diseases originating along the Overland Trail, and that they were at peace with the Arikaras but enemies of the Assiniboins, Hidatsas, and Mandans (Ibid:27). Finally, the Oohenonpas (Two Kettles) were headed by Two Bears, restricted their territorial reach to the

Moreau and Cheyenne rivers, and maintained good relations with the traders on the Missouri (Ibid:28-29).

Kingsley Bray (1994:172-174) has written that the Lakotas experienced a remarkable expansion of their population from 8500 people in 1805 to 16,100 in 1881. In this period, Oglala growth was staggering: their numbers increased nearly fivefold from a population size of 1000 in 1805 to 4800 in 1881. The growth of other Lakota divisions was more modest: Sicangus doubled their numbers and the Sihasapas grew by about forty percent. The Minneconjous, on the other hand, lost about half of their numbers, while the size of the Itazipcos and Hunkpapas remained about the same. Unlike the village populations who lost about ninety-five percent of their people from the time of contact to the reservation period, the Lakotas gained large numbers. Their nomadic patterns of dispersal helped them to avoid some of the most disastrous effects of the epidemic outbreaks that depopulated the village populations, but they also enabled them to broaden their adaptive strategies by covering a wide range of ecological and economic niches in the territories they traveled.

Clearly, part of their phenomenal growth was sustained by lower mortality rates and an improved access to food resources. Yet, it was also the result of people being siphoned off from other tribes, such as the Cheyennes and Poncas, who became integrated into the Lakota body politic. This was certainly happening internally. The remarkable growth of the Oglalas was the result of people being drawn from other divisions, especially the Minneconjous. Bray (1994: 185-186) argues that the Oglalas maintained an aggregative strategy, characterized by greater flexibility in their leadership, residence, and alliance formations, enabling them to rapidly and easily incorporate outsiders into their ranks. Moreover, they moved more often and dispersed themselves over a much wider range of territory. This allowed them to achieve an adaptive advantage because they continued to have access to prime food resources. This would have been particularly critical, after 1840, when bison began their precipitous decline in areas east of the Black Hills. The Minneconjous, on the other hand, followed a more stable strategy with limited movement, a hereditary leadership, and more rigid patterns of residence and alliance. As Bray (Ibid:185) puts it, they "shed their excess population to other Teton divisions."

III. TRIBAL TIES TO THE ENVIRONS OF WIND CAVE

In the decades before 1850 the tribal nations who lived in the shadows of the Black Hills were able to pursue many different opportunities in making a livelihood. They had access to a wide range of environments with a varied selection of game, plant, and mineral resources, and they possessed diverse strategies for drawing on them. They also had access to a large network of commercial centers in which to trade their own products for commodities of American manufacture. In making different choices, some bands established a fairly direct reliance on the commerce of American trading communities. Others, however, retained more of their independence, either through a highly specialized and trade-focused bison-hunting economy or through a more variegated and subsistence-focused orientation (see Chapter Seven). The particular paths local bands followed clearly influenced where they traveled and located their settlements and whether they remained in one area or moved on to another.

By the 1850s, the eastern Black Hills were not an ideal location for bands that were becoming heavily vested in the region's commerce as middlemen, as hide producers, or as pastoralists. The middlemen required territories near trading posts with a strong commercial traffic, and many of these were some distance from the Black Hills at locations along the Missouri and Platte. Nevertheless, as William Bordeaux (1929:45, 82-83, 191-192) and Susan Bettelyoun and Jose-

phine Waggoner (1988: 21) point out, these groups still made annual trips to the Black Hills for specialized purposes such as elk hunting and the procurement of lodge poles. Nor were they especially suited to the needs of the hide producers, who required access to hunting grounds where bison were plentiful enough to produce a surplus of robes for trade. Most of the good bison ranges were now situated at some distance from the Black Hills near the Republican, Tongue, and Powder rivers. Nevertheless, many of these groups traveled long-distances to the Hills every year to cut lodgepoles for their tipis, to carry out religious observances, and to conduct other specialized procurement activities (Bordeaux 1929:82-83, 191-192; De Giradin 1936:63; Denig in Ewers 1961:6; Parkman in Feltskog 1969:154,270-271; Bettelyoun and Wagonner 1988:21). The Hills were also not the most optimal location for groups who specialized in horse raising. As John Moore (1987:14) notes, many Cheyenne bands moved south in the winter to take advantage of a milder climate and richer grazing conditions for their horses but returned to the Black Hills region in the summertime. These transhumance migrations were determined not simply by the presence of bison and other sources of food but equally important by the availability of good pasturage for their horses.

Nonetheless, the Hills remained an excellent location for groups who pursued more diversified subsistence strategies, offering easy access not only to small herds of bison but also to elk, antelope, deer, and bighorn sheep. They also held diverse plant environments and good locations for winter shelter. For these groups, the Black Hills and its immediate surroundings constituted their primary territorial range (Hassrick 1964:156; One Bull in Stone 1982:23; White Bull in Stone 1982:25). As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven, some Lakota and Cheyenne bands spent a great deal of time at the base of the Hills and in the open parks at their southern reaches where good hunting grounds and pasturage for their horses were found. Many of them also used the high elevation interiors of the Black Hills in the summertime for specialized purposes and camped in these areas for short periods of time as well (Bordeaux 1929:45, 82-83, 191-192; Denig in Ewers 1961:6; Parkman in Feltskog 1969:154, 270-271).

Understanding that bands among the Arapahos, Cheyennes, and Lakotas followed diverse adaptive strategies during this time period helps us make sense of their wide-ranging and ever-shifting movements. From 1807 to 1850, the Black Hills stood within the vast territorial reaches of all three tribes. Indeed, it can be asserted that these tribes jointly and exclusively occupied the Hills throughout much of this period. While other tribal nations were known to have entered the Hills occasionally to trade, raid, and to carry on limited procurement activities, they no longer lived near the Hills on a year-round basis, nor did they reside at the base of the Hills for extended and seasonally defined stays.

In the case of the Cheyennes, the Hills constituted the heart of their settlement from 1780 to 1825. This was the place where the largest concentrations of Cheyenne lived and congregated. In subsequent decades, even as increasing numbers of Cheyenne, mostly Wotapio, Tsistsistas and their affiliated bands, moved away from the Hills to locations along the Platte and as far south as the Arkansas River in Colorado, the Hills still remained the home base for a substantial population of Cheyenne from the Totoimana, Osmisis, and Sutaio divisions. These Cheyennes inhabited the northern and western sides of the Hills at locations extending from the forks of the Cheyenne River to the Big Horn Mountains. Another recognizable body of Cheyenne made up mostly of Masikota and Hisometaneo continued to live on the southeastern side of the Hills at locations that covered a territory between the South Fork of the Cheyenne River and the upper reaches of the Niobrara. The Masikota were probably the Cheyennes that Parkman (in Wade 1947) placed in the Black Hills on his 1849 map. Regardless of where and how far away the Cheyennes lived and traveled from the Hills, they always returned to this area to conduct their religious observances, to trade, to meet and deliberate on political issues with other tribes, and to

procure a wide range of food, medicinal, and lithic resources (Curtis 1907-30:6:109; Moore, J. 1987:229-235).

Of the tribal nations who inhabited the Black Hills in the early half of the nineteenth century, the Arapahos were the oldest occupants. When the main body of Cheyennes took up residence around the Hills at the end of the eighteenth century, Arapaho settlements already encircled the Hills and had done so for many decades. Although some Arapahos were reported on the eastern side of the Hills near the forks of the Cheyenne River as late as the 1790s, the vast majority had moved to locations on their southern and western peripheries. Like the Cheyennes, the Arapaho bands of the early nineteenth century were dispersed over a wide geographic area, which extended from the North Fork of the Platte River near present day Casper, Wyoming to the Arkansas River in Colorado. By 1850, most of their bands lived outside the reaches of the Black Hills, but some wintered along tributary streams on the western side of the Hills. The Black Hills may no longer have been at the geographic center of this tribe's territorial reach but they were certainly well within its territorial boundaries (Fowler 2001:840-841, Personal Communication Oct. 2001).

For the Lakotas, the Black Hills did not become the geographic center of their territorial range until the 1830s. Some Lakota bands certainly lived there in earlier decades amidst Cheyennes and Arapahos, but for the vast majority, the Hills stood at the western margins of their territory. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, they were a location to which the Lakotas traveled to hunt bison in the summer and fall from their winter settlements on the Missouri River. By the 1820s, the eastern edge of the Black Hills had become well populated by Lakotas, who were now living in their reaches on a year-round basis. Over the next decade, Lakota camps would surround the Hills in the same fashion as the Cheyenne and Arapaho before them. Before the 1830s, the Lakotas were not the dominant population in the Black Hills, although this would change rapidly in subsequent decades. By the 1850s, the Lakotas were clearly the largest population in the Hills with smaller numbers of Cheyennes and Arapahos living in their midst.

In Lakota movements to the Hills, the Sicangus were the ones who occupied much of the territorial range on the southern end of the Hills, while the Oglalas took up the territory on their eastern peripheries. To the north, Minneconjous and Itazipcos dominated the Black Hills' landscape. In later years, this would change as Sicangus expanded their territorial reach south to the Niobrara River and beyond, as the Oglalas moved to distant locations south, west, and north of the Hills, as some of the Hunkpapas moved south and wintered on the northern edge of the Hills, and as Minneconjous took up residence on the eastern margins of the Hills and at locations as far south as the Platte River (Denig in Ewers 1961:16, 19, 22-23; DeMallie 1975).

From material presented in Chapter Seven, we can conclude that during the 1830s many Oglala, Sicangu, Minneconjou, and Itazipco bands of the Lakota and the Omisis, Sutaio, Totoimana, and Masikota bands of Cheyenne wintered near the Black Hills and remained in and around their reaches for much of the year, leaving them to travel to trading posts and to search out bison herds on the surrounding grasslands during the late summer and early fall. For the other bands, the Hills were not the locations where their people typically wintered, but places they visited on a regular and recurring basis for specialized purposes, especially during the summer months. Most of these visits were probably of short duration, a few weeks or even a month, but on some occasions, bands who typically wintered elsewhere may have stayed for an extended season or longer when game resources were scarce in the areas they customarily hunted or when politics and kinship compelled them to stay. No matter how their specific relationship to the Black Hills was defined, it is clear that a large portion of the Lakotas and Cheyennes were affiliated with the Black Hills in some way after 1835 and so too were some of the Arapahos.

The picture of the particular peoples who lived and traveled near the region of Wind Cave National Park is not much clearer in the early half of the nineteenth century than it was in the previous century. What we know about the area is still based on information that originated at far removed locations. More so than in the previous century, however, we can begin to specify the band affiliations of some of the peoples known to occupy this area, but we are still unable to determine from any direct line of historical evidence how this area may have been utilized. The record of human habitation from this period still rests largely on circumstantial evidence. From 1807 to 1850, there is no direct mention of any Arapahos living in the southeastern Hills or adjoining areas. This stands in contrast not only to the literatures reported from an earlier era but also to government correspondence from the next decade that documents Arapahos in the midst of Sicangus on lands within easy reach of the southeastern Black Hills and the area of Wind Cave National Park (Twiss 1855:82-83, 1856:96). Many of the same government accounts and also tribal oral traditions reveal that a few Cheyenne bands from the Masikota, and possibly the Omisis and Sutaio divisions were in the same area too, living among the Sicangus and Oglalas with whom they intermarried (Twiss 1855:82-83; Moore, J. 1987:229-234). The Wotapio Cheyenne, who had lived in this region at the end of the eighteenth century, abandoned the area probably when their Kiowa allies were under Lakota attack, and they were among the first Cheyenne to establish themselves in territories south of the Platte River (Moore, J. 1987:228-229). The Tsistsistas Cheyenne and their allied divisions were certainly within easy reach of the southeastern Hills and the area of Wind Cave National Park when they wintered at the forks of the Cheyenne River, but after 1825, they moved out of the area to the Platte River and locations farther south (Moore, J. 1987:234-235).

There is a much richer body of evidence for the presence of Lakotas in the southeastern region of the Hills, and after the 1830s, they unquestionably had the largest presence here. The Sicangu division was often associated with this area, and by the 1820s, much of their habitat followed the South Fork of the Cheyenne and the White River at locations only a short distance from the southeastern Hills (Deland and Robinson 1918:121-122,141,234; Clyman in Camp 1960:16-17; Denig in Ewers 1961:16; Hyde 1961:17; Hurt 1974:179, 181, 199, 201, 204, 206; De Mallie 1975:353-356; Cheney 1979:19). In the 1830s, a trading post was built for their commerce at Cache Butte, forty miles directly east of the Buffalo Gap (Deland and Robinson 1918: 95n12, 112n51,160; Price, C. 1996:21-22). Even more specifically, the Wazazi band of mixed Lakota-Ponca ancestry was one of the bands most often identified with lands bordering the southeastern Hills (DeMallie 1975:353-356). Some bands of the Oglala division were also affiliated with this area, even though many of them moved to the Platte or Powder River countries (Clyman in Camp 1960:16-17; Denig in Ewers 1961:19; Hurt 1974:200; DeMallie 1975:353-356). The Minneconjou were reported to have a small presence in the area as well (Deland and Robinson 1918: 121-122,141,234). Lakotas who typically wintered at locations on the northern side of the Hills, at the forks of the Cheyenne River, near the Missouri River, or at locations farther south on the Niobrara and in the Sand Hills of Nebraska, still used this region too, but they probably did so on a more opportunistic or restricted basis.